

**Innovative and Interactive Employee Training and development Techniques in Contemporary
Competitive Era**

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Abstract

The present times of flux and competition necessitate innovative and out-of-the box training strategies which can help in making employees adept to confront the surmounting job challenges. Despite horde of training techniques, the employees' competencies do not suffice the skill-set required. This calls for new and interactive training techniques for holistic development of employees so as to enhance the employees' efficiency and effectiveness. The paper tried to explore new and innovative training methods to enhance employees' competencies and conceptualize unconventional and out-of-the-box training techniques which would help employees assume their enhanced roles effectively. Some of these interactive and innovative training techniques that can be employed include: the not-so-valued perspective which further comprises the failure's foresight, the octogenarian cell and jet paced geniuses; putting everyone in the boss' shoe; sweeping roles with the competitors; Pecha kuccha and Learning management system (LMS).

Keywords: Training Techniques, Innovative Training Practices, Employee Training

Introduction

The present corporate times are characterized by change, competition and innovation. These competitive and constantly changing times require the taskforce to be equally competent and equipped to handle surmounting corporate pressure and challenges. In fact employees these days also have an inclination to join only those organisations wherein they can also avail opportunities for their knowledge update. Most of the top-notch organizations have provision of learning opportunities. This serves as a lucrative retention strategy for these big giants. This strategy is being widely used by organisations. They would rather invest in training and not let short term training budgets outweigh the long term benefits. Undoubtedly, as the workforce has to be delegated with varied roles & responsibilities, such training enables them carry out these roles & responsibilities & prepare them for the future responsibilities as well.

Dale S. Beach, highlights the significance of imparting training to employees stating that training is a very systematic process which is employed to enable individuals gain knowledge and enhance their competencies with some stipulated objectives. Edwin B. Flippo, also highlights the significance of training in improving efficiency of employees.

Conventional Training Practices

Broadly, the training practices pertaining to the corporate or business world are categorized into two classes. These are: In-service or On-The Job training Strategies. Off-The Job Training Strategies.

The former training technique, that is, on-the-job training technique is employed to train employees while carrying out their routine jobs. On the other hand, on-the-job strategies comprise not merely orientations, instructions for carrying out routine job chores, but also apprenticeships and internships as well. There can be various instructional styles employed for the same and some of these are seminars, using media like educational films, conferences, webinars, putting social media into use, case studies, role playing, simulation, programmed instructions, Computer Assisted and Computer based instruction etc.

A brief of the various on-the job training practices is essential here. One of the most economically viable techniques is organising special lectures. They are also helpful as a large number of audiences can be dealt simultaneously using this training technique. However, the flip side is that it is difficult to ascertain audience's comprehensibility in case of a lecture. However, it is widely regarded as one of the most widely used training strategy. Also, it is hard to ensure that the entire audience understands a topic on the same level; by targeting the average attendee you may under train some and lose others. Despite these drawbacks, lecturing is the most cost-effective way of reaching large audiences.

Another widely practiced training technique is Job rotation. In this technique an employee is made to do varied jobs so that he gets an idea of and can well comprehend the tasks and functioning associated with a particular job. Generally, managers and supervisors undergo such kind of trainings. This is particularly of benefit in business which is as small as a single individual can be asked to carry out multiple responsibilities. Apprenticeship is also one of the most widely employed training strategies. This kind of training is related to jobs that require production skills. When it comes to grooming ad training the would-be managers or marketing people, Internships are used as a training technique. It requires integrating classroom learning with practical exposure of the same in real world. Similarly, off-the-job training techniques also play a pivotal role in upgrading employees' skill-set and competencies. The significant off-the-job-training technique is Role playing where participants are made to enact a particular real world situation and respond according to the stimuli presented to them. The purpose is to help the employees in quick decision making in real world situations.

Another such training technique is Simulation. This is employed in various fields like Defence,

Teaching, Medicine and Business etc. Here also, the participants are put in situations which are a replica of the real-world but are devoid of dangers associated with it. It is based on the premises that one's experience is undoubtedly, one's biggest and best teachers. These days media like social media, audiovisual aids like television, films etc. are also employed. The advantage of using media is that the content and its quality would be the same irrespective of the time it is played and it cannot be subjected to outside factors, challenges and constraints.

Programmed instruction is one of the innovative and interactive training techniques. The biggest advantage is that it allows the learners to learn at their own pace. Computer- Assisted Instruction and Computer-based instructions exemplify this mode of learning. The difference between the two is that while the former that is, computer assisted instruction uses computer just as an aid, the latter, that is, computer-based instruction replaces the instructor with the machine itself and hence is devoid of human factor-empathy and emotion. This paper aims at conceptualizing so far unexplored, unthought-of interactive training techniques. We deem that such training techniques will modify the working patterns and lifestyle of people.

Review of Literature

Michael J. Jucius, supports Beach's views and states that training enables individuals acquire and enhance competencies and capabilities that are specific to their job requirements.

Oatey (1970) lays stress on benefits of training. He emphasises the significance of training in enhancing employee's potential of carrying out a task. He further adds that it also ensures an all-round social, mental and intellectual development of the employees. This is instrumental not only in giving a boost to the productivity but also in improving employee's overall efficiency and personality.

Yoder (1970) stated that training should incorporate a quintessential component "development" as well. This will make employees reach their full potential. Training alone is not suffice and should be expanded to include development of the personnel concerned.

Raymond (1986) did research on training stating that the success of any training technique is largely dependent on the personality and behavioural traits of the trainees themselves. He added that motivated employees would help in success of training programmes. He also added that such factors as motivation, favourable environment have hitherto not received much consideration. He iterated that the attitude and characteristics of the trainees go a long way in influencing any training programme and should be given due importance.

Whitlock (1986) stated that the training and development should go beyond the confines of conventional training techniques and strategies. He highlighted the significance of looking for new training methods and also stressed the significance of making a thorough analysis of objectives, needs, employee traits, capabilities, resources available etc, before finalizing a training approach.

Carlos A. Primo Braga, (1995) states that the instructional style or the strategy of delivery is of great importance in any training. The trainer's role cannot be undermined in determining the success of any training programme.

Michael Armstrong, (2000) also highlighted that the trainees get influenced by the delivery style tremendously.

Griffin and others (2000) also seconded Armstrong's view as they asserted that the impressiveness of trainer is very important. The trainer should be able to keep the audience engrossed with his delivery style.

Tan, Hall and Boyce (2003) in their research on training stated that realizing the pertinence of training programmes, organisations these days are investing in them a lot. The organisations are foreseeing the importance of training for their employees and are keeping substantiate budget for training programmes as well.

Ruvolo, P., Whitehill, J., Virnes, M., & Movellan (2008), have given a comprehensive analysis of various on-the-job and off-the-job training styles. They have stressed on the significance of apprenticeship as a training style in business world.

David Mc Guire and Mammed Bagher in the year (2010) reviewed a big corpus of literature on training, diversity training in particular. They highlighted the significance of diversity training in organisations, and also studied the influence of power, privilege and politics on diversity in organizations. They studied both the pros and cons of diversity training in organisations. They have stressed that diversity training paves way for ensuring conducive work environment and promotes equality, inclusion and unbiased work culture.

Davis and Richard (2010) in their research too have highlighted the fact that the success of a training programme is dependent on a trainee's ability to integrate his theoretical learning in real world practices. They also underlined the importance of various innovative tools like audios, videos, programmed instruction in any training programme.

Thomas Andersson (2010) studied various aspects of management training. He brought about the differences between the management practices and management training. He elaborates that the real world management practices are not fixed. They are fluid in nature. However, on the other hand, training for management is confined to acquiring certain competencies, skill-set, personal grooming etc. This leads to conflict of perception one has while "becoming a manager" and "being a manager". Management Training, he asserts, should enable one to get through the complex corporate sector.

Need and Objectives of the study

There is a horde of training techniques but still the employee retention is a major concern even for the best organizations. Also, organizations have to train from the scratch even if they hire from the world-class educational institutions. The role of employees has also been redefined and enhanced to include formulation of strategies and decision making. With the organizations fully supportive of the open door policies, employees today do not just carry out responsibilities as per the management's directions but are instrumental in collective decision making. This calls for new and interactive training techniques for holistic development of employees so as to enhance the employees' efficiency and effectiveness. This paper aims at making the following explorations:

- To explore new and innovative training methods to enhance employees' competencies.
- To conceptualize unconventional and out-of-the-box training techniques which would help employees assume their enhanced roles effectively.

Innovative training techniques

Despite the fact that conventional training techniques are still in practice today and have been quite successful in training employees but the changing times of flux and dynamism necessitate new, novel, innovative and out-of-the box training strategies which can help in making employees adept to confront the job challenges. Some of the innovative training techniques that can be integrated in the employee training programmes are discussed here.

A. The not-so-valued perspective

- The failure's foresight
- The octogenarian cell
- Jet paced geniuses

B. Put everyone in the boss' shoe

C. Sweeping roles with the competitors

D. Pecha kuccha

E. Learning management system (LMS)

A. The not-so-valued perspective

Every thought and every idea is significant. This is what has made the open-door-policy a salient feature of all the reputed organizations across the globe. As Bill Gates states, 'I choose a lazy person to do a hard job because a lazy person will find an easy way to do it.' The not-so-valued perspectives should be taken into account. One such repository of fresh and out-of-box ideas would come from those who could not make it big; others who are on the rear end on the scale of age and experience and lastly, who score

high on the creativity or intelligent quotient and might not be directly related to the field.

- **The Failure's Foresight**

The world's philosophers, scholars all unanimously hold the view that one should learn and gain from the wisdom and expertise of those who could make it big. Through this paper, we would like to recommend that the views of those who could not be successful are equally important and could serve as important input for the prospective leaders, managers and strategists. Where a successful person knows ways of how to achieve success, achieve goals, of all the "do's", an unsuccessful can elucidate hundreds of "don'ts", of the various pits and bumps on the path to your goal, of the deceptive and illusive ways. Such words of caution are also as important as words of inspiration.

- **The Octogenarian Cell**

Sophocles once stated, "Old age and passage of time teaches all things." It is this learning and wisdom that can be put to use. So, the old age community centers are a fresh repository of knowledge and experience. These seniors are more than glad to help the progeny with their knowledge and experience. In fact, there's no requirement of reinventing the entire wheel. One can depend on tried and tested techniques hitherto successful for years. An innovative training program can benefit a lot from such wisdom and experience. These octogenarians will probably be ready to work for no or negligible charges. A lucrative proposition is to seek inputs from an experienced individual than to go for training your employees employing conventional techniques.

- **Jet-paced Geniuses**

The most prized resources are the human resources and all the more valuable are the creative geniuses, the ignited minds. There are geniuses gifted with remarkable creative acumen who can think and share insights that seem astounding. Such geniuses should be recognized, identified and approached for their ideas and perspectives.

B. Put everyone in the boss' shoes

There are some employees who are cut above the rest. They have everything right in their kitty-ample experience, capabilities and competencies to tackle even tricky situations and make good decisions. Such employees cannot just be inspired and encouraged with the usual training approaches. What is required is an innovative approach to keep them enthused and motivated. A smart fix is to make them the boss for a day. When everyone is put in the boss' shoes, it won't take them long to realize that being a boss is a herculean task. In fact, some individuals may even come up with some novel, exciting, efficient ways of business management. Consider a new, effective way of managing business. After every one in the organisation has played the lead, you can call for a meeting and take their inputs. Now, playing the lead may be just for 24 hours will help individual dawn realization of how tedious it is to wear the crown. This will in fact help in furthering a cordial relationship between employers and staff.

The staff will be inspired if it is kept abreast with the policies and procedures. Their help and perspectives can be sought in executing new ones.

C. Sweeping roles with competitors

Weird it may seem, but one of the most effective and innovative training methods would be sweeping roles with competitors. Rendering services to someone who is actually in competition with you could be a motivating idea for some. Also, irrespective of one's business and its locales, there must be some such organisations with which one has not a one-on-one relationship of that of a competitor. These organisations might also be confronting with similar kind of issues, challenges, obstacles. Just sweep roles with such competitors or businesses as it could be a good proposition to gain from their insights, situation and practices. This could be a win-win situation for both the parties concerned. It makes the employees acquire many new way outs that aren't being currently employed by their present employer.

D. Pecha Kucha

Pecha Kucha is a style of presentation. It involves showcasing twenty slides. Each slide is shown just for twenty seconds. Such a style of presentation ensures brevity, good-pace and multitude of ideas and thoughts. Many speakers get an opportunity to put forth their ideas in these events which are called Pecha Kucha Nights. Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham are the pioneers of these events. Their objective was to enable the youth to come together, exhibit their creativity and interchange thoughts and ideas. These events are already being organised in many parts of Europe. The benefits of attending such events for audience are:

- **Brevity:** A total of twenty slides for twenty seconds each in one go and the audience are credited with a unique, innovative idea. Such format is contrary to the long drawn out meetings. Those presenting have to ensure that their central message be really interesting and engaging. So considering the time factor, it is a highly economical format.
- **The visual delight:** Such presentations are indeed a visual delight. They stress more on the central text. As the content needs to be precise, they should embody the quintessential element of wit. Wit would make these presentations exciting to the creativity innovation seekers.
- **Stimulate creativity:** Such presentations give a room to the audience to brainstorm, and also critically appraise ideas, thoughts and messages of the presenter. This way they foster creativity, novelty, originality and innovation.

E. Learning management system (LMS)

A learning management system (LMS) helps in carrying out training programmes using technology. It is needed to not just instruct but also deliver educational content, evaluate learning outcomes all using technology. The record keeping or documentation of educational programme is also carried out with the help of technology in such a system. This has made training and learning highly accessible. They have

made training modules, content, curriculum reach out at every threshold at the mere click of a button. The benefits of such system are enormous and include: speed, accessibility, reach, and instant and immediate evaluation.

Conclusion and Implications

The appropriate training techniques are a boon in developing human resources effectively. All the other functions of management- planning, organising, controlling etc will be futile as long as employees are not trained adequately. From the employee orientation phase till their exit, training is conducive for both the individual as well as organisation. Training therefore is indispensable, and so effective training practices should be an integral part of organisation's functioning.

The afore-mentioned innovative, interactive, novel techniques can go a long way in enhancing not just competencies but also employees' mental well-being and would ensure their overall development. These training techniques cater to the contemporary changing business requirements and would lead to giving monetary benefits to employees and will enhance their productivity. These techniques can be incorporated in many spheres and are conducive to organizations' health and well-being as well. These can be supplemented with the conventional training techniques or can be integrated in the on-the-job training programmes.

The following implications can be inferred from the study:

- ❖ The study conceptualizes hitherto unexplored training techniques that can be employed by corporates, businesses, and educators of various spheres effectively to train future managers, leaders, taskforce.
- ❖ These techniques can also be incorporated in the personality enhancement programmes and can also be used in ice-breaking sessions by companies.
- ❖ The right blend of old and new training techniques is required to create a pool of well-equipped and highly-skilled employees.

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